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Global Historical and cultural Aspects Definition and Scope of expression History

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Etymologically the expression history is derived from Latin Historia “narrative of past events, account, tale, story” from Greek historia “a learning or knowledge, account, historical account ; record or narrative” from historein “be witness or expert, give testimony, recount, find out, search, inquire” and history “knowing expert, witness.” It also refers to old French estorie, estorie “story ; chronicle, history.”¹

According to the Oxford English Dictionary history means a written narrative constituting a continuous methodical record, in order of time or importance or public events especially those connected with a particular country, people or individual. In general the quest about knowing the past is known as “history”, which is a branch of knowledge dealing with events, political, social, economic of a country, continent or the world. E.H. Carr says “The function of the history is to promote a profounder understanding of both past and present, through interrelation between them.” In Greece Herodotus, who belonged to six century B.C. is recognized as the Father of History” According to him, the scope of history is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and the facts, and an understanding dialogue between the present and the past.²

Relationship of History with other social sciences

History does not mean just mentioning of dates and events connected with some kings or dynasties, but deals with the aspects of economic development, development of political and administrative systems, evaluations of urban life, development of science, literature, art, architecture etc.³

History under Indian Methodology

Etymology attested by Panini (An Indian Sage) indicates history in Indian dialect "It-hasa" to mean "Thus indeed in this tradition". Chankya's Arthshastra define "It-hasa" as Purana (The Chronicles of ancients) ; it ivrta (history), Akhyayika (tales), Udhaahrana (illustrative stories), Dharmashastra (the canon of righteous conduct) are known by history (comprise of corpus of Iti-hasa)⁴. According to Mahabharata (universal history of war between Pandvasw and Kourvas at Kurukshetra involving universal royal dynasty more than 500 years back), which itself considered to be "itihasa", a knowledge of itihasa and Purana is essential to the proper understanding the veda.⁵ Thus Mahabharata and Manu-Samhita states "One should compliment one's understanding of Vedas with the help of Itihasa and Puranas like wise Puranas are called by that name because they are complete.

To trace the history of global appreciation, The culture, language, religions, rituals, are the basic elements of the society in investigation or research. The Random house Dictionary defines culture as "the quality in a person or society that arises an interest and an acquaintance with what is generally, the scholarly pursuits etc⁶ are. The culture of the community is the soul of the community's dialect as the language, in the most important means to help the culture to survive and grow Prof. W.D. Whitney nicely records his observation to this regard "We regard any language than an institution, one of those which in each community, makes up its culture⁷. The culture and civilization having a great tradition of that community enriches its language also. Anthropologists speak of relation between language and culture more in accordance with reality to consider language as part of culture, language is transmitted culturally that it, is learnt⁸.

Developing conceptual mindset in the past

In the initially past, the conceived concept in the west in the primitive mind was that earth seems to be the whole flat floor of the universe ; the sky is a dome above across which the Sun and Moon and stars pass and pass again, returning by some mysterious round-about or subterranean route. The Babylonian and Chinese astronomers, after many centuries of star observation, still believed that the earth was flat. It was the Greek mind which first grasped clearly and spherical form of the world, but even so it did not apprehend the universe as relatively very large. The globe of

earth was the centre of being, the sun and the moon, the planets, the fixed stars moved about it as their centre, in crystalline spheres. It was only in the fifteenth century that the men's mind (especially in the west) moved beyond this, and Copernicus made his amazing guess that the sun was the centre and the earth not. It was only with the development of the telescope by Galileo in the start of the seventeenth century that the view of Copernicus became accepted⁹.

Migration of Early culture – Heliolithic culture

As suggested in Elliot Smith's Migrations of early culture) there seems to have been a special type of Neolithic culture widely distributed in the world, which had a group of features so curious and so unlikely to have been independently developed in different regions of the earth. It reached through all the regions inhabited by the brunet, Mediterranean race, beyond through India. Further India up the Pacific coast of China, and it spread at last, across the Pacific and to Mexico and Peru. It was a coastal culture¹⁰.

This peculiar development of the Neolithic culture, which Elliot Smith called the heliolithic "Sunstone" culture, included many or all practices (i) circumcision (ii) the queer custom of sending the father to bed when a child is born known as the couvades (iii) the practice of massage (iv) the making of mummies (v) Megalithic monuments e.g. (Stonehenge) (vi) artificial deformation of the heads of young by bandages (vii) totto ing (viii) religions association of the sun and the serpent and (ix) the use of the symbol known as the Swastika for good luck¹¹.

Elliot Smith traces these associated practices in a sort of constellation all over this great Mediterranean – Indian Ocean – Pacific area. For thousand of years from 1500 to 1000 BC. Such a heliolithic Neolithic culture and its brownish possessors may have oozed around the globe through warmer regions of the world, drifting by canoes often across wide stretches of sea. It was then the highest culture in the world ; it sustained the longest, most highly developed communities. It is the origin, as Elliot Smith suggest the Mediterranean and North-African region. Many of the people of the East-Indies, Melanesia and Polynesia were further observed to be still in this heliolithic stage of development when they were discovered by the European navigators, in the eighteenth century. The first civilization in Egypt and the Euphrates – Tigris valley probably directly developed out of this wide spread culture. The Semitic nomads of the Arabian desert seem also to have had a heliolithic stage¹².

The American Indians

The original American population belonged to the Mongolian race, and is considered to have reached the American continent by way of Bering strait at a Palaeolithic stage of development. Late fresh elements of population and fresh cultural ideas at the heliolithic level may have arrived America by sea¹³.

The American tribes over the great part of the continent remained at a level of Neolithic barbarism. Over acres of seasonal grass they became nomadic, following the bison. In the far north they followed the caribon, the American reindeer. The horse did not exist on the American continent in the human period until it was introduced by the Europeans. In the tropical forests, the American Indians became hunters of birds and small game. However in one or two its fertile regions, They also developed, more developed social order by way of irrigation and constructing important buildings of buildings of stones, which of course were adorned with elaborate carving of highly conventionalized and often fantastic design by founding cities and empires¹⁴.

Emergence of Rome and Carthage from the Western Mediterranean

Before 1200 B.C. That is to say before rise of the Assyrian empire, the seize of Troy and the final destruction of Cnossos, but after the time of Amenophis IV, Italy, like Spain was still inhabited mainly by dark white people of the more fundamental Iberian and Mediterranean race. But as in Greece, the Aryans were coming Southward. By 1000 BC. Immigrants from the North had settled over most of the north and centre of Italy and as in Greece, they had intermarried with their darker predecessors and established a group of Aryan languages, the Italian group, more a kin to the Keltic (Gaelic) than any other, of which the most interesting from historical point of view was the spoken by the Latin tribes in the plains South and east of the river Tiber. The Greeks who had settled down in Greece, and were also crossing over to South Italy, and Sicily, established themselves there by way of establishment of their colonies as well along the French Riviera besides founded Marsilles upon the site of an older Phoenician colony. The date 753 B.C. is given for the foundation of the Rome by two brothers namely Romulus and Remus, though Etruscan tombs beneath, the Roman Forum of much earlier date than that of the so called tomb of Romulus bears an decipherable Etruscan inscription¹⁵. It was Pyrrhus a kinsman of Alexander the Great, commanded an admirable army, routed the Romans at Heraclea 280 B.C. and defeated them again at Ausculum 279 B.C. in their own territory, further under a truce, brought the sea power of Carthage into alliance against him, have a strong power established so close to her as Sicily.

The English Republic

The open struggle of the private property owner against the aggressions of the “Prince” begins the England far back in the twelfth century. It was the phase opened with the attempts of Henry VII and VIII and their successors, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth I to make the Government of England a “personal monarchy” of the continental type. It may become more acute, when, by dynastic accidents, James King of Scotland, became James I King of both Scotland and England (1603) and began to talk of his “divine right” to do as he pleased the document in question was Magna Charta, The Great charter, a declaration which was forced from King Johan (1199-1216), the brother and successor of Richard Coeur de Lion (1189-99) after a revolt of the Barons in 1215. It rehearsed a number of fundamental rights that made England a legal state and not regal state. It rejected the power of the king to control the personal property and liberty of every sort of citizen – save with the consent of that man’s equals. After resolution of the long struggle in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries between the main factors in the problem of the “modern state” ; between the crown, the private property owners and the vantage power, aftermath of the secret treaty with Louis XIV of France by which England undertook to subordinate entirely English foreign policy to that of France for annual pension of at 1,00,000 (English pounds), the British Parliament has held and still holds much the relation of the mayor of the Palace to the Merovingian Kings. The King is conceived of as ceremonial and irresponsible, a living symbol of the royal and imperial system. But much power remain latest in the tradition and prestige of the crown and the succession of the six Hanoverian Georges, William IV (1830), Victoria (1837), Edward VII (1901), George V (1910), Edward VIII (1936), George VI (1936) and Elizabeth II (1952), is of a quite different strain from the feeble Merovingian monarches. In the affairs of the church, the military and naval organization, and the foreign offices, these Sovereigns have all in various degrees exercised an influence which is no the less important because, it is indefinable¹⁶. In 1783 Canada was finally ceded to Britain¹⁷.

Early civilization of India.

It is believed that man appeared on the Indian sub continent five hundred thousand years ago. Due to the climatic conditions except for the solitary finding of the hominid fossil from Hathanaura in the Narmada valley, no early human fossils have found in India¹⁸. However according to Sanatan astrologer’s calendar of this year so published by Pandit Devi Dayalu Jyotishie and Sons. They year from the creation of the universe is stated to be one hundred and Ninety five crores, fifty eight lakh, eight five thousand one hundred and twenty one year, the Kalik Samvat (year) 5121, Lord Krishana’s Samvat 5226, Saptrishi Samvat 5096 ; Mahatma Buddh Samvat 2643-44 ; Hizri year 1441 Christan year 2020 A.D¹⁹. The sources of writing Indian history can be classified in two major categories – literary and archaeological. The literary sources may be divided indigenous literature further can be gathered from Santain sacred literature viz Vedic, epic, Smritis and Puranas,

part from the Jains and Buddhist literature. The allied sources aiding in writing of the Indian history can further be gathered such as the Arthashastra of Kautilya, Ashtadhyayi of Panini, Maha Bhasya of Patanjali. The Raja tarangani of Kalhana, Harsha Charitra of Bana, Vikramadeva Charitra of Balhana and Nava Sahansanka Charita of Padama Gupta. Further aiding materials in shape of Manimekalai and Silppadi Karam of Tamil literature and the Sangam literature Pathinenkilkanakku and Pattupattu, The Palnati Veera Charitra and Katamraju Kathalu of Telugu Literature are the ballads in praise of their Kings. The Kural of Tiruvalluvar speaks of the moral and cultural values of these days. The Foreign literature can be gathered from the writings of foreign travelers and pilgrims, the Greco-Roman writing, Chinese writings, Arab writings, European (Italian and Portuguese Travellers writings) The Archaeological sources can be materials gathered from excavations, numismatics and epigraphy., The Influences of geography to the historical facts, as well as the climatic conditions also cannot be overruled.

Puranically, India at the first instance was known as "Himvarash" was further known as Bharat varsh after the name of Bharat the son of Rishabhdev²¹, the area of which is defined as between the Himalayas and the sea coasts (North and South) and on the east the inhabitants of Kirrats and on west the Yamanasa tribes²². Infact puranically the territory of India, which has also been termed to the Greater India by the eminent historians including R.C. Majumdar (1888-1980); Philologist Suniti Kumar Chatterji (1890-1977), P.C. Bhargava (1898-1956) and these historians Phanindra Nath Bose and Kali Dass Nag (1891-1966). Some of their formations were also inspired by concurrent excavations in Angkor by French Archaeologist and by the writings of French Indologist Sylvain Lévi. The scholars of the society postulated a benevolent ancient cultural colonization of the South-East Asia in stark contrast. The colonizers in India did not go with sword and fire in their hands but they used a weapon of the superior culture and religions. The Buddhist age has attracted special attention and the French Scholars have taken much pains to investigate the splendid monuments of the Indian cultural empire in the far east²³. By some accounts Greater India consists of "Lands including Burma Java, Cambodia, Bali and the former Champa and Funan polities of present day Vietnam²⁴. In the west also the Mahabharat one of the great epics as source of ancient history, not only the areas of West Pakistan but Gandhar Tibet etc were forming part of our Greater India in the ancient times.

Harappan Civilization (Indus valley Civilization)

The excavation by D.R. Salani in 1920-21, first discovered relics of civilization at Harappa in the Montgomery District of Punjab. The next of such excavation site is Mohenjodaro in Larkana district in Sindh which is discovered in excavation by R.D. Banerjee (both being known as Indus civilization. The 1400 settlements discovered so far are spread over a vast area of 12,50,000 sq kms extended upto Sutkagendor in Baluchistan in the West Alamgirpur (Meerut) in the east, Mandi

(Akhnoor in J&K) in the north. Out of such 1400 sites of Harappan civilization 925 are in India, 475 in Pakistan. The Harappan civilization is firmly now placed between 2300 BC and 750 BC against previously believed to be between 3200 BC to 2750 BC. The origin Harappan civilization is firmly now placed between 2300 BC and 750 BC against previously believed to be between 3200 BC to 2750 BC. The origin Harappan civilization, believing to be from Sumerians settled in the valley of two rivers Euphrates and Tigris (now in Iraq) is also under cloud based on the recent excavations in Sindh, Punjab Baluchistan affirming that the Harappan civilization originated in India, but they had lot of commercial and cultural contacts with Mesopotamia.

Languages of mankind

Prof. Leonard Bloomfield appreciably describes the importance of language being “Language plays a great part in our life, perhaps, because of its familiarity, we rarely observe it, taking it rather for granted, as we do breathing or walking. The effects of language are remarkable and include much of what distinguishes man from animals²⁶”. Interestingly, it is only human being who have been endowed with the ability of learning a language or languages. Not that much only, he has been blessed with a power to pass it on to others too. In other words he has the power to teach a language or languages to the other even, as it is very important vehicle of thought and thereby is also a very powerful means of communication. Obviously, the language plays a very significant role to be communicative link. In short we cannot convey our thoughts clearly to others without the help of a language²⁷.

Appreciating the role of languages, the European Sanskrit Professor W.D. Whitney rightly observed “Language may be briefly and comprehensively defined the means of expression of human thoughts in a wider and freer sense, everything that bodies forth thought and makes apprehensible in whatever way is called language²⁸”

Aryan Languages

On great group of languages now cover nearly all Europe and stretches out to India. It includes English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Russian Armenian, Persian and various Indian tongues, i.e. the said group is called Indo-European or Aryan family²⁹.

Semitic Languages

Philologists distinguish another group of languages the Semitic. Hebrew, Arabic, Abyssinian, ancient Assyrian, ancient Phoenician and number of associated tongues are put together as being derived from the second primary language, which is called the semitic³⁰.

Hamitic Languages

Among the Hamitic languages are the ancient Egyptian and Coptic, the berber languages (of the mountain people of North Africa, the Masked Tuaregs and other such peoples) and what are called Ethiopic group of African languages in the eastern Africa, including the speech of the Gallas and the Somalis³¹.

The Ural-Allaic Languages

Across the North-East of the Aryan and Semitic areas, the left over languages is known as Urals-Allaic or the Turanian group. This includes the Lappish of Lapland and the Samoyed speech of Siberia, the Funnish languages, Magyar, Turkish or Tartar, Mancho and Mongol, having left out from exhanstive study by the European philogists³².

The Chinese Languages

This group is called as Chinese or Monosyllabic group which includes Chinese, Burmese, Simese and Tibetan languages³³.

Other Language Groups

These are called as miscellany such as the Bantu (In African family group), Dravidian in South India, Malayo-Polynesian stretched over to Polynesia³⁴.

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